

# Wyoming On Wellness

VOL. 1, NO. 3

"Commit to Your Health"

SPRING 2007

## 6 CANCER PREVENTION simple things you can do

**1. Avoid tobacco products of any kind, including secondhand smoke.**

That includes cigarettes, cigars, pipes, and smokeless tobacco. This one is non-negotiable.

**2. Follow cancer-screening guidelines for your age and sex — such as Pap tests, mammograms, and colonoscopy.** Early detection is the strongest weapon in the fight against cancer.

**3. Eat more whole grains, fruits, and vegetables** and less animal fat.

**4. Get regular physical activity.** Exercise improves your overall health by reducing stress and helping with weight control.

**5. Always use sunscreen.** Generously slather on sunscreen with an SPF factor of at least 15 whenever you go outdoors, even on hazy days. Too much sun can cause skin cancer, the most common type of cancer.

**6. Use alcohol only in moderation.** (No more than one drink per day for women, two drinks per day for men.)

Source: Cancer Research and Prevention Foundation

## Can I still take the Health and Well-Being Assessment through GreatWest?

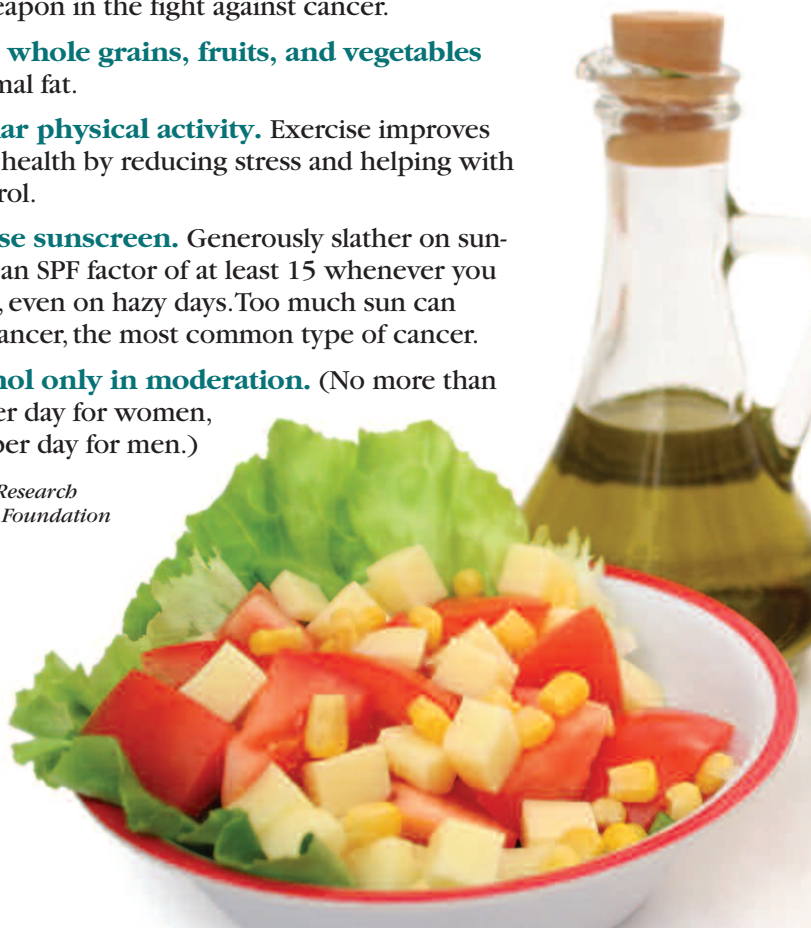
**The answer to this is YES!**

After you register on their site, you can take advantage of what GreatWest has to offer. This web site has everything from interactive tools such as trackers, quit-smoking help, pain management and meal planning as well as "Ask an Expert" to get specific questions answered about your health.

Go to [www.mygreatwest.com](http://www.mygreatwest.com) to register. If you have any questions, please contact Tammy Till at 777-6716 or e-mail her at [till@state.wy.us](mailto:till@state.wy.us).

## Inside this issue

health yourself .....	2
fitness .....	3
news you can use .....	4 & 5
eating well .....	6
take care .....	7



# health yourself

## MEMORY LOSS

### When it's normal, when it's not

**“Senior moments” or occasional lapses of memory can be a normal part of growing older.** There are some differences between normal memory loss, however, and symptoms of Alzheimer's disease that should be evaluated by a doctor. For instance:

**In normal aging you forget...**

- Where you put your reading glasses, but you don't forget you wear glasses.
- Why you went into a room, but not where you are.
- People's names once in a while, but not their faces.
- Where you parked your car, but not that you drove your car.
- Specific words occasionally, but not what the word means. (“You know, whatchamacallit?”)

Sources: *The Brain*, Vol. 12, pg. 7; University of Arizona



#### Tips for improving memory

- Pay careful attention to things when they first occur.
- Repeat things you want to remember.
- Think about information in a meaningful way and relate it to other things you know or have experienced.

## SPRING CLEANING

### Quick steps to cut down on clutter

- 1. Label empty boxes with categories such as “Keep,” “Throw Away,” “Recycle,” or “Move to Another Place.”**
- 2. Start with things that will clear the biggest space fastest.** If newspapers or toys are strewn all over a room, pick them up and put them in a single pile first.
- 3. Keep only items that you really love or absolutely need.** If you're in doubt, ask yourself if an object is really worth taking up precious space.
- 4. Resist the urge to read saved magazine articles or fill out lost forms.** Put them in their pile, but don't get sidetracked.
- 5. Finish one corner of a room before moving to the next.** Wait until you're done sorting to transfer the items in your “Move to Another Place” box. Flitting from room to room is another way to get sidetracked.
- 6. Place things you plan to keep in like groups,** whether it's clothes, CDs, books, papers, or paper clips. Use clear containers for storage.
- 7. Set a specific date to sell or take the things you are not keeping** to a charity, a dump, a recycling station, or other outlet.

## WEIGHT CONTROL

### When it's “time” for breakfast

**If you're not really hungry until 9 a.m., forcing yourself to eat breakfast at 6:30 a.m. may only add to your total calories for the day.** You'll probably be hungry and want to eat again at 9 a.m. anyway.

Pack a snack bag and eat a quick breakfast at 9 a.m., 10 a.m., or whenever you're really hungry. By delaying breakfast, you'll probably also eat a lighter lunch.

Nutritious “snack bag” breakfast items include whole-grain breads or bagels with peanut butter or a small amount of tuna, sliced chicken, or beef; cottage cheese and fruit; yogurt and a hard-boiled egg.

People who eat breakfast have more success with losing weight and keeping it off, but you don't need to set your breakfast by the clock.

Source: *The Way to Eat, A Six-Step Path to Lifelong Weight Control*, by David L. Katz, MD, and Maura Harrigan Gonzalez, MS, RD

# fitness

## RUNNING WITH KIDS

### How to keep it “fun”

**T**raining for and participating in fun runs and walks (usually a distance of five kilometers or approximately three miles) can be a great family fitness activity. Parents serve as good role models while kids learn that physical activity can be a fun and rewarding social outlet.

To keep it fun:

- Walk or run at your child's pace — don't worry about the time.
- Let your child take a walking break if he or she needs it.

- Start out slowly and remember that “easy does it.”
- Talk to your child throughout the run or walk and continually offer praise.
- Frequently ask your child questions like: How are your legs doing? How are you feeling? Is this pace right for you?
- Teach your child to save some energy for a “kick” when you cross the finish line.
- Give your child a big hug at the finish!

*Source: Kids Running*

## LET'S ROLL!

### Skateboard and skating safety

**S**kateboarders and in-line skaters have a better chance of avoiding serious injury if they learn how to fall.

Make sure your skateboarder (or you) knows to crouch down on the skateboard if he or she starts to lose their balance so they will not have as far to fall.

Since wrist sprains or fractures are the most frequent skating injury, the idea is to land on the fleshy parts of your body and roll instead of absorbing the fall with the arms. Even though it sounds difficult, try to relax.

The number one safety rule is to wear the same type of helmet as those approved for bicycling. Kneepads, elbow pads, and wrist guards are important for additional protection.

Skating on smooth surfaces also cuts down on injuries.

*Source: National Safety Commission*

## WALKING

### Protect your canine partner

**I**f Fido is your number one walking buddy, protect his paws by regularly checking for debris, rocks, swelling, or cuts on each toe, nail, or pad.

Since many dogs are sensitive to having their feet handled, it's helpful to get them used to this by regularly checking them.

Wounds on dogs' feet are particularly susceptible to infection because they can be hidden and are exposed to dirt.

*Source: Bianca Shaw, DVM, in WalkAbout, July/August 2006*

**Smart Living**

*Always pack workout clothes when you travel.*

# health news

## Doc Talk

### Start with the “tried and true”

**One of the fundamental principles taught in medical school is “First, do no harm.”** In practice, this is not as straightforward as it sounds. Physicians regularly receive “educational” materials, “free” samples, and “consulting” opportunities from drug and medical device companies. Even though these treatments have been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, they still come with risks — some known and some unknown. The pain-killer Vioxx was being used by 2 million Americans when it was taken off the market for its potential to increase the risk of heart damage. In the first half of 2006, the FDA recalled seven medical devices with a “reasonable chance that the product will cause serious health problems or death.”

What can you and your doctor do to minimize these risks and improve your chances of getting the results you desire?

- 1. Start with treatments that have a long track record** of safety and effectiveness.
- 2. Whenever possible, phase in one treatment at a time**, giving each treatment enough time and a high enough dose to get the maximum benefit at the lowest risk.
- 3. Use the fewest number of different medicines** to do the job.
- 4. Ask your doctor about treatment alternatives** and their relative risks and benefits so you can decide what option is best for you.

**William J. Mayer, MD, MPH**  
Medical Editor

## vegetables & brain power

**Eating three servings a day of vegetables, particularly dark, leafy greens, may help keep your brain young.**

Adults over 65 who ate two or more vegetables every day had 35 to 40% less mental decline over six years than those who ate less.

“That’s the equivalent of being six years younger in age,” says researcher Martha Clare Morris of the Rush University Medical Center in Chicago.

Vegetables may protect memory and thinking because they contain high amounts of antioxidants.

*Source: Neurology, Vol. 67, pg. 1370*

## know your past

**People with a family history of cancer have the most to gain from lifestyle changes and screening tests to prevent cancer.**

Collect as much information as you can about the health histories of your grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, siblings, and other close relatives, especially those diagnosed with cancer before age 50. Share it with your doctor.

Even if you have inherited a risk for cancer, earlier and more frequent screenings, as well as specific treatments in some cases, are steps that can be taken to reduce the chances of developing cancer.

*Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Office of Public Health Genomics — Family History Resources and Tools*

## gas money

**Americans spend an extra \$2.2 billion at the gas pump each year because of overweight and obesity.**

Although not everyone is overweight, the average American man now weighs 191 pounds, 25 more than in 1960. The average woman weighs 164 pounds, up from 140 in 1960.

The added weight accounts for an extra 1 billion gallons of gas being used annually.

*Source: The Engineering Economist, October-December 2006*

## rosacea

**More than 13 million people in the U.S. have rosacea, a chronic skin disease that starts with flushing or blushing of the face that lasts longer than normal. Rashes, redness, blemishes, and red lines caused by enlarged or damaged blood vessels are other symptoms.**

Although there is no cure, rosacea can be controlled with prescription medications. Avoiding things that can trigger the condition also helps. Common triggers include exposure to sun and wind, spicy foods, hot beverages, alcohol, certain medications, exercising in hot weather, stress, cosmetics, and skin products.

If you suspect you have rosacea, see your doctor to rule out a more serious condition.

*Source: American Academy of Dermatology*

**“Always forgive your enemies — nothing annoys them so much.”**

— Oscar Wilde

# you can use

## caffeine

A moderate amount of caffeine — about 250 milligrams a day — is safe for most adults. That's about 17 ounces or two to three cups of brewed coffee.

Caffeine also appears in some other surprising places. Certain orange sodas have more caffeine than colas. Many sports drinks and teas are also caffeine-fueled. Chocolate is another source, and espresso frozen yogurt may even contain small amounts.

The stimulating effects of caffeine can last up to 12 hours.

Source: Center for the Advancement of Health

## the game of life...

In addition to the fitness benefits, competitive sports can teach young participants how to win and lose gracefully, as well as these other important values:

Discipline, goal setting, preparation, composure, striving for excellence, ethics, and teamwork.

Source: Seattle University, Center for the Study of Sport

## helmet how-tos

To make sure a bicycle helmet fits correctly, use the “eyes, ears, and mouth” test:

**Eyes:** When you look up, you should see the bottom rim of the helmet. This should be one or two finger-widths above the eyebrows.

**Ears:** The straps should form a V under the earlobes, and should be snug but comfortable.

**Mouth:** When you open your mouth as wide as you can, you should feel the helmet hug your head. If not, tighten the straps.

Source: Safe Kids World Wide

## travel health insurance

If you're planning a long trip outside the country or one on which you'll be doing activities that put you at risk for injury, it's a good idea to purchase travel health insurance.

Depending upon your age, it will cost between \$1.50 and \$3.00 per day for \$1 million of medical and \$500,000 of evacuation insurance. Most health insurance plans provide only limited overseas coverage, and will not pay for evacuation from a foreign country, which can easily cost \$10,000 or more.

Sources: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; [www.insuremytrip.com](http://www.insuremytrip.com)

## how to save on drug costs

Ask your doctor these questions:

1. Are there any lifestyle changes I could make that would make it possible for me not to take this medication?
2. Are there any over-the-counter medications I could use instead?
3. Is there a lower-cost generic drug for this prescription, or even a less-costly medication than this one?
4. Could you prescribe a double dose so I can cut the pills in half? (Some pills cannot be cut in half.)
5. If there are no over-the-counter or generic alternatives, can you give me any free samples or do you have any discount coupons?

You may also save on prescription costs if your health plan allows you to get a 90-day supply for drugs you take regularly. Don't be shy. It's your money you're saving.

## short naps

A short, well-timed nap can take the edge off sleepiness and help maintain or even increase alertness and performance.

The optimum nap time is about 20 to 30 minutes. If you fall into a deep sleep of an hour or longer, you awake feeling groggy instead of refreshed, says Dr. Ralph Pasqually of the Swedish Sleep Medicine Institute.

In general, napping is no substitute for a good night's sleep, and most adults need seven to eight hours every night.

Source: National Sleep Foundation

## kitchen duty

To help prevent foodborne illnesses, put dishcloths and sponges in the microwave for one minute between uses and wash them weekly in hot water in the washing machine. Kitchen clean-up items collect and promote the growth of disease-causing bacteria.

Source: Medical College of Wisconsin

The information in this publication is meant to complement the advice of your health-care providers, not to replace it. Before making any major changes in your medications, diet, or exercise, talk to your doctor.

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# eating well

## Asparagus in warm tarragon vinaigrette

- 1/2 pound asparagus
- 2 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- Olive oil cooking spray
- 2 tsp. Splenda®
- 1 tsp. minced garlic
- 1 1/2 tsp. minced fresh tarragon
- 3/4 tsp. sea salt
- 1/8 tsp. freshly ground pepper
- 2 Tbsp. chopped, toasted pecans
- 2 slices cooked turkey bacon, crumbled

**Bend the asparagus and break off the ends where the spears break naturally.** Discard ends and slice spears in 1 1/2-inch pieces. Mix the vinegar and Splenda® in a small bowl and set aside. Coat a nonstick skillet with olive oil spray and heat over medium-high heat. When the skillet is hot, add garlic and sauté until softened, about 1 minute. Add the asparagus and sauté until tender, about 5 minutes. Stir in the vinegar mixture, tarragon, salt, and pepper and mix well. Cook for another 2 minutes. Sprinkle the pecans and bacon over the asparagus, and serve immediately.

Serves: 6. Per serving: 150 calories, 3 g carbohydrate, 2 g protein, 13 g fat, 280 mg sodium.

Source: Reprinted from *Zone Perfect Cooking Made Easy*, by Gloria Bakst with Mary Goodbody, published by McGraw-Hill

## Stock up

**If your kitchen is prepared with the basics for healthy cooking, it will be easier to prepare quick, nutritious meals. Try to keep a supply of these items on hand:**

Onions, garlic, shallots, olive oil, balsamic vinegar, low-sodium chicken and beef broth, Dijon mustard, nuts, brown rice, whole-wheat pasta, frozen vegetables, and canned beans.

## FOOD MYTHS

### True or false?

- **Fresh produce is always better than frozen.**

**False.** Frozen foods are processed within hours of picking, but it may take days for fresh fruits and vegetables to get to stores. The best way to preserve vitamins and minerals is through proper cooking and preparation. Steam vegetables in small amounts of water instead of boiling. Eat the skins (after washing) on apples, potatoes, and carrots.

- **Fruit juice can cause tooth decay.**

**True.** The sugar in juice, just like the sugars in milk or regular pop, can be especially harmful to children's teeth if they drink from a bottle

or "sippy cup." **Solution:** There's no need to avoid juice, but be sure to brush teeth afterwards or drink juice with meals only.

- **Chocolate and fried foods cause acne.**

**False.** Due to high caloric content, these foods should be limited, but

studies dating back to the 1950s show they are not likely to cause acne.

- **All alcohol evaporates in cooking.**

**False.** According to the USDA, 40% of alcohol remains after 15 minutes of cooking and 20% is still present after 1.5 hours.

- **"Take out" containers are not safe for microwaving leftovers.**

**True.** Toxins can seep into your food from plastic, Styrofoam, and cardboard containers. Use heat-safe glass or ceramic dishes to microwave food.

- **Carrots help your night vision.**

**True.** Getting enough vitamin A in your diet, such as from carrots, can help you see better in dim light, but it won't eliminate the need for glasses.



# take care

## COMPUTER TIME

### Kids' health sites

**T**hese kid-friendly Websites will help kids learn more about health and how the body works.

- **[www.4girls.gov](http://www.4girls.gov)**

Covers body image, fitness, nutrition, relationships, and more for girls ages 10 - 16. Sponsored by the National Women's Health Information Center.

- **[www.bam.gov](http://www.bam.gov)**

BAM (Body and Mind) focuses on important topics like stress and physical fitness for ages 9 - 13. Created by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

- **[www.healthfinder.gov/kids](http://www.healthfinder.gov/kids)**

Developed by the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, features safe surfing tips, games, and contests.



## “April” Health Observances

### Sports Eye Safety

**E**ye injuries occur most frequently in baseball, basketball, and racquet sports. Yet nearly all can be prevented by wearing the proper equipment.

Goggles and face shields should be made with polycarbonate lenses — regular glasses do not provide enough protection.

For basketball and racquet sports, wear safety goggles. For youth baseball, use helmets and face shields. When playing hockey, wear helmets, mouth guards, and face shields approved by the U.S. Amateur Hockey Association. To learn more, visit the American Academy of Ophthalmology at [www.aao.org](http://www.aao.org).

### Foot Awareness

**T**hree-inch spiked heels may be fashionable, but they can change the way a woman normally walks, as well as cause knee and back problems and contribute to sprained ankles.

Limit high heels to special occasions. For everyday use, aim for wide heels no more than two inches high. When buying shoes with pointed toes, the narrow part should start well past the ball of the foot. Visit the American Podiatric Medical Association at [www.apma.org](http://www.apma.org) to answer your questions about shoes and feet.

## SLEEP

### Snoring is no laughing matter

**W**indow-rattling snoring can be a sign of sleep apnea, a condition that increases your risk for high blood pressure, heart attack, stroke, and diabetes.

People with sleep apnea may stop breathing several times during the night, or seem like they are holding their breath. The condition is more common in men than women. Daytime sleepiness, trouble concentrating, irritability, and forgetfulness are other symptoms.

**Being overweight or obese can lead to sleep apnea, but even modest weight loss can help improve breathing and reduce snoring.** Drinking alcohol less than four hours before going to bed and taking certain medications, especially sleeping pills, can also be sleep apnea triggers.

If you or your bed partner has noticed you have signs of sleep apnea, talk to your doctor. The condition can be treated with airway machines that allow you to breathe normally while sleeping. Certain prescription dental devices may also be helpful.

Sleeping on your side or stomach, taking decongestant pills (as directed on the label), and using nasal dilating strips are other ways to keep nasal passages open and decrease snoring.

*Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute*

# agency wellness programs

## Agency Wellness Programs

### **D**id you know that your agency could have its own wellness program?

For a list of Agency Wellness Coordinators for the State, go to <http://hr.state.wy.us/egi> then go to "Links to Other Sites" and click on Governor's Workforce Wellness.

Contact your coordinator today and see how you can help with the wellness program, or just to see what is going on with your agency's program. Many agency wellness programs have a way to earn "points" toward administrative leave and other incentives. You may also be able to combine your two breaks and have one 30-minute break to participate in wellness activities. Check with your coordinator for all the details.



Participating in a wellness program has so many positive benefits:

- **Increased cardiovascular health**
- **Weight loss**
- **Lower stress**
- **Friendly competition with co-workers**
- **Quality time together with friends**
- **A common interest**
- **Motivation and support**
- **Sharing health information**
- **Fun**

Studies show that adding moderate activity to your daily routine will positively change your health. This moderate activity includes doing things such as parking further from your destination, walking and taking the stairs instead of the elevator.

Don't forgo exercise just because you don't have a morning or afternoon to devote to working out. In a 10- or 15-minute break, you can get your heart pumping; just start walking or do a mixture of lunges and jumping jacks. For an impromptu strength session,

incorporate moves that work your whole body. Do ab crunches while sitting in your chair or simple leg lifts as you stand. To maximize your calorie burn, do not stop between the sets.

If working out for 10 minutes doesn't seem very effective, just remember that every good thing you do for your body will help you on the road to a healthier you. Burning 50 - 100 calories is always better than burning zero! Making small changes in your diet and lifestyle will lead to a fitter, happier you over time. Take every opportunity to make good choices that will benefit your body and watch how 10 minutes here and there can add up to a lifetime of fabulous health!

It is important to gradually work exercise into your daily schedule. Start with very low intensity, especially if you are not used to it and are just starting out.

If you have any questions regarding Agency Wellness, please contact Tammy Till at 777-6716 or e-mail her at [ttill@state.wy.us](mailto:ttill@state.wy.us).